

Guardian

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Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multi-National Brigade (East)

January 26th, 2005

Keeping Watch ***On the ABL***

***Patrolling the Line Between
Kosovo and Serbia***

DRIVE CAREFULLY



DRIVE CAREFULLY

Keep Kosovo's Future Safe

Take your time and watch for kids

This message brought to you by Task Force Falcon Command Information

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January 26th, 2005

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PHOTO BY SPC. IAN BLAKE



PHOTO BY SGT. BENJAMIN HOKKANEN

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Staff Sgt. David Brigman on patrol along ABL during Operation Condor.

COVER PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES

By 1st Lt. David Lane

Avoidable Accidents



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TOMAS ROFKAHR

The sounds of accidents have been far too common on the routes we travel upon here in Kosovo. Unfortunately, far too many of these accidents are preventable. In the past 45 days, there have been two fatal accidents involving pedestrians in our area of operations. As we near the end of this deployment, it is important for us to refocus on driving safety.

How can we prevent traffic accidents off-post? There are many familiar ways, and our Soldiers have been putting these methods into practice while on this deployment.

For starters, "Drive to Arrive," USAREUR's safe-driving campaign, is probably more applicable here in Kosovo than in the rest of Europe – especially given the poor state of the roads.

"The first tip in driving to arrive is to obey the speed limits," said Anne Ferguson, from the Area Support Team Safety Office. It takes our vehicles longer time and distance to come to a stop. We must also remember the corollary, "The posted speed limit is the maximum speed allowable for good road conditions – it is not the required speed," added Ferguson.

Kosovo has few sidewalks. This means that pedestrians and vehicles have to share the roadway. Many of the pedestrians here are children. When we

see pedestrians walking on the roadway, the best thing we can do is slow down. Children and adults can be unpredictable, and often their lives rest in the balance. When pedestrians are present, slow down and scan the road for any unpredictable behavior. This doesn't mean simply slowing down to the speed limit, it means SLOW DOWN. Brig. Gen. Tod Carmony, MNB(E) commander, was adamant when he said he wanted us to slow down to the point that the people on the road noticed we had slowed down. Eye contact with pedestrians is also important because it may keep them from darting into the road in front of you.

It is critical as we approach the end of our deployment that we remember to share the road and yield the right-of-way to pedestrians. Don't take the attitude that "I have the right of way, and everyone else needs to get out of my way." Instead, focus on making sure that everyone will arrive safely to their destination. We cannot control or change the way the civilian traffic in Kosovo operates, but we can control our driving. By driving safely, everyone can arrive at their destination. ✪



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Guardian

Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multi-National Brigade (East)

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Quicktime

New School Opens in Strpce

Tucked away in the little town of Biti e Eperme/Gornja Bitinja, the local children have a new school to call their own. Opened on Jan. 17th, 2005, the school features five classrooms and a standard bathroom.

Prior to the school's opening, 22 students were enrolled in the last semester, and school officials said it is possible for another 12 to 18 students to return if their families return to the area.

Hamdi Aliu, Vice-President of the Strpce principality, Sadik Ymeri, Deputy Director of Education for Strpce, and the school's director, Hamdi Rushiti, attended the opening. Each read a prepared statement praising the school's opening. Representatives from Task Force Falcon also attended the opening and inspected the building and its facilities before the school was officially opened to the public.

Classes began at the school on Jan. 18th, with elementary school classes being taught in the morning and high school classes taught in the afternoon.



PHOTO BY SPC. IAN BLAKE



PHOTO BY SPC. IAN BLAKE

(Above) Col. Ralph Nooks, Task Force Falcon G5, converses with school children at the opening of their new school in Gornja Bitinja. (Left) POLUKR BAT commander, Lt. Col. Ryszard Wrobel, talks with Hamdi Rushiti, the school's director, at the school's opening in Biti e Eperme/Gornja Bitinja.

Army Overpays 53,000 Soldiers By Mistake

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service made an error that will cause about 53,000 Soldiers to be paid too much in January. The Army will collect the funds from end-of-month paychecks to restore financial balance.

Most of the affected Soldiers will receive overpayments of between \$200 and \$300. There are 316 Soldiers who will receive overpayments of more than \$500, a DFAS official said.

When the Army "draws back" the overpayments, it will take back the overpayments of \$500 and more in two installments, officials said, to reduce any potential hardship for Soldiers. Those who received less than \$500 extra will see the drawback in the January end of the month paycheck. Col. Kenneth Crowder, director of Army Pay Operations for the

Defense Finance and Accounting Service, said those affected are Soldiers who have Army meal cards, but who are authorized for reimbursement for some meals.

Crowder said an incorrect date entered into a computer database caused the error. He said DFAS was changing to the new rate for meal reimbursements, when a data entry error backdated the change to 2004 applying the new rate to the entire previous year.

He said DFAS is notifying the affected Soldiers via their Army Knowledge Online accounts and through their chains of command.

"Every Soldier involved will receive a specific, personal e-mail explaining what occurred and what the corrective actions are," Crowder said.

DoD Starts "America Supports You"

On Nov. 19, 2004, the Department of Defense launched a nationwide program, "America Supports You," and a new Web site to showcase the many activities taking place across the nation in support of the troops. The Web site, which highlights organizations and individuals coordinating local and national support efforts, has logged nearly a million hits since its inception.

Individual citizens, businesses, schools, veterans groups and others have visited the site <http://www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil> to register their activities, send a message to the troops and identify programs of support in their own communities.

Allison Barber, deputy assistant secretary of defense for internal communications and public liaison, said that while the Department of Defense knew that many of these programs existed, "the 'America Supports You' Web site has proven to be a useful tool in helping to link people and programs, and more importantly, to share these stories of support with the people who need to hear them most – the men and women serving overseas. The feedback from our troops has

been tremendous, just as the outpouring of support from the American people has been overwhelming."

Americans can join "America Supports You" by visiting the site and registering their activities, large or small, in support of the troops. Everyone who registers receives an official "America Supports You" dog tag that people can wear as a visible symbol of support for the troops. The dog tags have been seen across the country, worn by celebrities like Ellen DeGeneres and Wayne Newton, and worn by every day citizens at national events, such as the Macy's Day Thanksgiving Parade, the Fiesta and Rose Bowls, and the New Year's Eve Celebration in Times Square.

Barber also suggests that businesses, schools, churches, corporations and individuals add the link to their Web sites. "Service members and their families have told us how much they are inspired by the messages of support from all across the nation that are posted each day. Whether you post a message on the site, or team up with a local group organizing care packages, every activity sends the message loud and clear: 'America Supports You.'"

Army To Utilize NASCAR Windshields on Helicopters

NASCAR windshield tear-offs will soon provide Army helicopters an extra layer of protection from sand, rocks and debris thanks to two National Guard Soldiers.

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Kagi and Sgt. Michael Mullen, Virginia Army Guard helicopter mechanics, submitted the idea to use windshield tear-offs to the Army Suggestion Program after discussing the idea at a Christmas party five years ago.

Their unit went to the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., with brand new helicopters. However, when they came back, they had to replace about 80 percent of the windshields due to sand damage.

"Sand will eat up a glass window. It gets so pitted you can't even see out of it," said Kagi. "That's where Sgt. Mullen got the idea. He said, hey, they put tear-offs on race cars at Daytona and Texas for that very reason—to protect them from sand and debris."

Kagi did some homework, researching tangible cost savings for the

tear-offs, and the idea was submitted through the Army Suggestion Program channels for evaluation. Eventually, the aviation team at the Aviation and Missile Research Development & Engineering Center, Redstone Arsenal, Ala., together with the Defense Logistics Agency, picked up the idea and funded all the testing.

"In order to put anything on a helicopter, we have to do a lot of testing on it because if a helicopter doesn't work, it crashes—and that's bad news," said Doug Felker, a Reliability, Availability and Maintainability (RAM) team leader at the Aviation and Missile Research Development & Engineering Center.

Felker and team put the windshield tear-offs through a series of environmental testing and visibility testing, with the naked eye and night vision goggles. They also flight-tested the tear-offs on an aircraft in California in a brownout condition, where the aircraft purposely flies into a dust and sand environment, said Ken Bowie, RAM team member.

"The material has met or exceeded our expectations on all the tests at this point," said Bowie, "that is how we got our airworthiness release."

An Army airworthiness release is similar to its civilian counterpart, FAA approval. Any aircraft modifications must have this release before going into effect. "Tear-offs are simple solutions to a tactical problem," said Bowie. "The problem is operating in a sandy, dusty environment."

The point of the tear-off is that if there are incidences where a windshield gets pitted or dinged up, the damage is on the Mylar, not the windshield. Instead of replacing the windshield, which is timely and costly, the Mylar can be torn off, and the aircraft can move on.

Current predictions estimate the life of one tear-off to be about six months. As long as the tear-off is not hit by something it won't handle, like bullets, and a fresh piece of Mylar is kept on it, the windshield should last forever, said Bowie.

Polish Fired Up For Weapons Qualification

By Sgt. Benjamin Hokkanen

Polish soldiers from the 5th Mechanized Battalion, 21st Rifleman Brigade of Rzeszow, Poland, travelled out to the Falcon Two range for some marksmanship training.

The weapons the Polish soldiers fired were their issued 5.56 KBS Beryl rifle and the 9mm Wist pistol.

At the range, Lt. Kaliszczak was the officer in charge, ensuring the safe running of the range.

Much like American Soldiers at the range, some of the Polish soldiers needed some pointers on things like trigger-squeeze, sight picture, and breathing techniques. These tips were provided by Lt. Artur Kopcivch, who was working as the range instructor.

Each soldier was allotted five rounds of ammunition. Scoring was conducted by tallying the rounds each individual placed inside the scoring rings, going from 10 points down to six.



PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. JEFFREY DURAN

(Top) Lt. Artur Kopcivch of the 5th Mechanized Battalion, 21st Rifleman Brigade, counsels a soldier on breathing techniques.

(Center) A Polish soldier marks his shots.

(Left) Lt. Kopcivch gives some advice on aiming techniques.

Fit or Fat: Which One Are You?

At the close of the rotation, it's time to evaluate our health choices and see if we are better or worse than when we started.

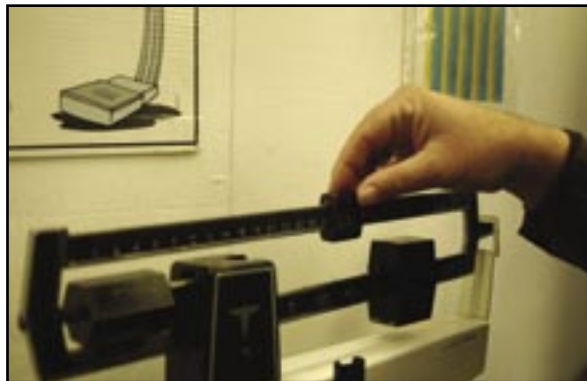


PHOTO BY SPC. IAN BLAKE

How do you weigh in on your fitness goals?

Fit or fat: that was the choice, that was the challenge. Where would you be health and fitness wise after six months in Kosovo?

Well, with the transfer of authority looming in the near future, there are a lot of folks starting to think pretty hard about what they've accomplished these past few months.

For some, the time away from work, family, and time-killing traffic jams, has allowed them a rare opportunity to fit a regular workout back into their routine. By watching what they eat, sticking with their workout schedule, and enjoying the fine gravel-lined walk to the chow hall three times a day, they've started to slim down and muscle up.

For others, things are somewhat more pear-shaped. Between the operational tempo, the stress, and that outstanding new ice-cream bar, they've picked up a few pounds, dropped a few points on their PT test, and for an elite few, maybe even picked up a pack-a-day bad habit.

Regardless of where you happen to fall in these two scenarios, the next important step is figuring out what you're going to do next. As many of us start to make that mental and emotional changeover from Soldier to civilian, it's important to include the positive lifestyle changes that regular exercise and a healthy diet can bring to our post-Kosovo lives.

The key phrase here is "lifestyle

change" – it's something we all went through when we put on Army green. Regardless of our reasons for doing so, by becoming Soldiers we each agreed to live a life of service and sacrifice that often isn't well understood by non-Soldiers. In addition, we were taught the basics of the warrior ethos and are expected to keep ourselves mentally, emotionally, and physically fit.

For many of us, the lifestyle change from civilian to Soldier was enough to get us on track fitness-wise. After all, promotions are tied to performance, and if you don't perform on your PT test and make weight, you tend not to go far. For others, exercise is still work, something to be done without joy (if at all) and shirked if no one is looking.

For myself, the most positive change I was dealt here in Kosovo was losing my 110-mile, two-and-a-half-hour, daily commute. Between that epic trek, family, and a software development career that keeps me cubical bound, sedentary, and surrounded by coworkers fond of Mountain Dew, pork-rinds, and "Babylon 5" re-runs, I found it difficult to balance time and muster enough effort for a good workout.

Here on Bondsteel, I traded that two-hour commute for a 100-meter walk. In addition to a significantly shorter travel time, I'm surrounded by a myriad of fit, positive, Soldiers intent on making themselves faster, stronger, and better. The net result of these

changes is that since arriving in Atterbury back at the beginning of June, I've dropped about 16 pounds and keep a resting heart rate of around 50 beats per minute. I've never been a speed demon, but I can run for more than two hours straight now, and I think that accomplishment alone is one worth celebrating.

While my successes might not be all that impressive to some, they're mine. Each pound I lost was the product of eight months of steady commitment. I ran whenever I could, I ate ice-cream when I needed a boost, and I didn't get wrapped around the axle when my run times didn't seem to be improving or my weight dropping as fast as I might have liked.

The key factor for me was that I found running to be an easy way to maintain my weight, and also a great way to alleviate stress. Deployments are rife with stress, so I found ample opportunities to run. Eventually, with reasonable goals for success, time, and some great folks to run with, I've been able to turn a "chore" into something I look forward to. For me, getting to run is a reward in and of itself – not something I have to reward myself for doing. The positive outcomes for this new reward are zero anxiety during weigh-ins, clothes that fit better, and less worry about a family history full of congestive heart failure.

See *HEALTH*, page 23



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

Family Reunions

Reconnecting with your spouse/significant other and your children can present its shares of joys and headaches.

A Soldier is welcomed home by family members in Asheville, N.C., after more than 15 months deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Soldier is assigned to the 210th Military Police Company, North Carolina National Guard.

With the end of the 6A rotation rapidly approaching, many of us are gearing up for going home. Welcome home parties are being planned, vacations are being arranged, and many other activities are in the works for us upon our arrival to wherever home may be. What about after the parties and vacations are done? What are some good activities to do with your friends and loved ones to get re-acquainted? Those are good questions, and Sgt. Gary Wright, 139th Combat Stress Control Team, has some good answers.

Many Soldiers feel that after being gone for so long on this deployment, there is a lot of catching up to do. While this is true, Wright reminds us that we shouldn't try and catch up all at once or too fast. Soldiers should make sure they don't over commit their time.

This isn't to say that we shouldn't go out with our friends or family, but we need to remain cognizant of the fact that we need our alone time as well – time for us to relax and become assimilated to the civilian world in which we live. Our alcohol tolerances aren't what they once were, stresses Wright, so don't get home and go crazy partying and hurt yourself. Well, enough about that, here are some things to do with your friends and family to help get you back into civilian livin'.

Remember that you and your significant other are sort of new to each other after being away for so long, said

Wright. Changes have occurred in both of you, physically and mentally. If the two of you can't go away on some big spectacular vacation, take a few weekend trips or mini-vacations. Take your spouse into the city and get a hotel room for a Saturday night and make a mini-vacation that way. Anything that allows the daily stresses to be removed and gives the two of you time to spend exclusively with one another. Go out to eat at a favorite restaurant. The biggest thing is to remember to show affection, and not just in a physical manner. Also, keep all expectations realistic! Tension between the two of you is natural and to be expected when intimacy is involved. When two people have been separated for any long period of time, it usually takes some time to become relaxed and reacquainted.

Parents are typically excited to get home and see their children. One thing to consider here is that to kids, eight months is a very long time.

When we get home, our children will be more than halfway done with another school year. Because of commitments to school, teams, and any other activities the kids may have in place, parents need to be careful not to just go charging right back into their child's life. Parents should not try and force the issue with their children after returning home, it has to be on the child's terms. One of the little things that parents can do to ease the transi-

tion with children is to pick them up after school.

Some other things to do include going to the child's favorite restaurant, making a point of going to your children's activities, whether it is a sporting event, dance recital, concert, or whatever other event it may be. Just make sure to spend quality time with each individual child. Not only is it a good time to give them a special gift you may have gotten them while you were away, you also have a good chance to talk with them about any questions they may have about what you did while you were deployed and you can find out what things have been going on in their lives while you were away.

One important thing for single parents to remember is to incorporate the person that was the primary caregiver for their child while they were away into the things you do with your child. This way the child isn't in such shock and turmoil about another new situation, says Wright.

That person, whether it's your mom, dad, significant other, child's other parent, or whatever the case, has been with the child through the whole deployment, helping them cope with your absence. ❖



Sgt. Benjamin Hokkanen is a member of the 364th MPAD. You can reach him at benjamin.hokkanen@monteith2.areur.army.mil

By Sgt. Benjamin Hokkanen

What Makes the Army: Soldiers

Soldiers careers in the military all come to an end at some point. Sgt. Chrisilyn Davis has spent the last nine years of her life in the Active Army. The Army has taught her different lessons, and introduced her to many people. She looks forward to applying all that she's learned during her career to her new civilian life that she is about to embark on.

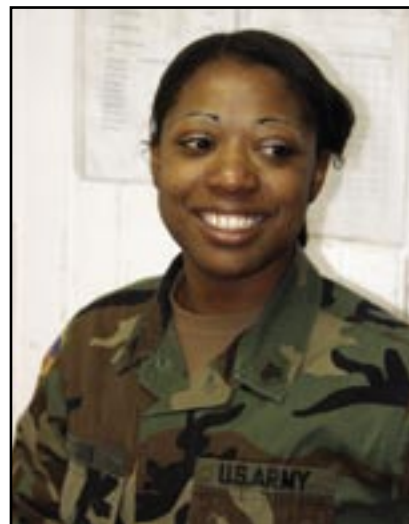


PHOTO BY SGT. BENJAMIN HOKKANEN

Why did you join the Army?

Honestly? It was a challenge from my brother because he's in the Army also. He told me that it would be fun and that I'd get to travel. I told him, "But I'm 23 years old." He told me that it was too easy and that I could do it because basic training was just a mind game. So I went ahead and signed up. The recruiter came and I went delayed entry for a year. Well, I forgot that I had signed up for the Army, and in the meantime I got a new job as an assistant customer service manager at a grocery store. Then the recruiter came and told me that I had to go to the MEPS station in Jacksonville, Florida and get my physical done and all those things, but at this point I didn't want to do it anymore because I was doing well at work. But it was all worth it.

Have you always been a 92Y?

I have always been a supply sergeant. I like my job a lot mainly because I love to shop! I also like it because I am in control of my own supply room, and I work mainly by myself. I don't have to work in an office with a bunch of other people; therefore, I do not have to depend on or compete with anyone. Also, everyone depends on you and people come to you for help. Everyone

thinks that supply sergeants are corrupt, and we're always trying to pull one over on you by having you sign for stuff that isn't really there and then charge you for it later – most supply sergeants don't work that way. We just want to help the Soldiers out and keep our commanders out of jail at the same time.

When you were joining the Army initially, what made you decide to become a supply sergeant?

Full Name: Chrisilyn L. Davis
DOB: January 1, 1973
MOS: 92Y - Unit Supply Sergeant
Hobbies: Hiking, Swimming, Outdoors,
Hometown: Statesboro, Ga.
Unit: 734th Ordnance Company, EOD
Rank: Sergeant

Well, my aunt is also in the Army and she is a legalist. She and my brother told me of a few MOSs that I would like. My aunt told me that if I became a legalist I would never have to go to the field, and I would spend my time in the office filling out power of attorneys here and there and other paperwork. So I asked if I could do that, but at the time they told me they didn't need any more legal assistants. So then the recruiters offered me a position as a cook, and I

told them heck no right away because I didn't even cook in my own house, why would I cook for anybody else! Then they offered me a job as a fuel petroleum specialist. Luckily for me, my brother had told me that I didn't want that job either because all they do is pump gas. Finally, they offered me 92A and 92Y. I asked the recruiter what the difference was and they told me that they were both supply. I told them that I would have to think about it and that I would let them know the next day. So I called my aunt and asked her, and that was when she told me that a 92Y works specifically for the unit commander, handling all of his property at the unit, and doing the same job, whereas a 92A can work in warehouses or motor pools or other various places—somewhat like a guinea pig. So, with her help I decided on 92Y, a unit supply sergeant. I thought it was great because I would get a credit card and go shopping! Again, I love to shop! So that is how I decided to become a 92Y.

How long have you been in the Active Army?

A long, hard nine years.

Where all have you been stationed during your career?

See DAVIS, page 22

Riot Control Training



PHOTO BY SPC. IAN BLAKE

Situations arise from time to time during the course of peacekeeping that cannot be handled by one force alone. Events happen every now and again that require one group to call upon the aid of another. But what happens when one force does things differently than

the other? Does the difference in equipment make things difficult? And the language barrier is always a hurdle that must be overcome to make a cohesive effort.

To better prepare KFOR personnel to deal with riot situations and increase coordination between

different nationalities, a riot simulation was organized by Task Forces Lancer and Phoenix, the Italian and French personnel Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU) out of Pristina, along with military

See RIOT Next Page

Story by Spc. Ian Blake



(Previous Page) An Argentinean soldier, in full riot gear, secures a building during a riot simulation.

(Above) Soldiers from Troop C, 2-107th Cavalry, Task Force Lancer, pull security after arriving via helicopter to a riot simulation outside Pristina.

(Right) A Polish soldier in full riot gear stands in formation during a riot simulation outside of Pristina.

RIOT Continued

personnel from the Jordanian, Polish, and Argentinean detachments. The exercise took place on the grounds of a former Norwegian base, Camp Lebane.

"The simulation is of a government building with an arrested person inside being set upon by demonstrators," said French Gendarmie Capt. Nicolas Bassot, deputy G3 of MSU, "With the demonstrators encroaching on the compound, intervention is needed."

The demonstrators, portrayed by Jordanian personnel, started their move on the compound by chanting and hurling plastic water bottles. They did not get very far at first, for a contingent of Polish and Argentinean forces in full riot gear arrived to drive them away. In uniformed steps, and with plastic riot shields at the ready, they engaged the demonstrators, calling for them to disperse. The protesters didn't make it easy for them, jeering, shoving,

and even jump-kicking the formation.

When it appeared that the situation could not be resolved through words, the Polish soldiers lobbed a couple of smoke grenades into the crowd. In the smoke and noise the formation rushed forward, driving the crowd away from the compound. This process of call to disperse, smoke, and charge was used until the demonstrators broke up. This was only a momentary breather before they marched on the compound again.

Additional support was airlifted from Camp Bondsteel as reinforcements from the quick reaction force. Troop C of 2-107th Cavalry, Task Force Lancer flew in. After donning their riot gear, they took their shot at subduing the demonstrators, with about the same amount of success.

With the situation on the brink of escalating, additional help from the MSU and an additional team from TF Lancer were flown in. It would be with



PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES

this combined force that the exercise would culminate, said Bassot. The demonstrators would attempt to enter the compound by any means necessary, and the combined forces would attempt to stop them. In an interesting and realistic move, real tear gas was used in the exercise. At that point the service members had donned their protective masks and were unaffected as they charged through the gas cloud. The demonstrators, on the other hand, fell to the influence of the gas and were ejected from the compound, ending the simulation.

Those involved and the leadership who observed from the side praised the realism and intensity of the exercise.

"The exercise made great use of realistic training," said Capt. Dan Long, Troop C commander, 2-107th Cavalry, TF Lancer, "It gave those involved confidence in their equipment."

In addition to becoming acclimated

to tear gas and riot procedures, those involved had a chance to interact with forces that may perform riot tactics differently.

"Doing rehearsals with the other nations makes coordination easier," said Sgt. 1st Class William Cedoz, Troop C, 2-107th Cavalry, TF Lancer. "The Italians do their procedures differently than the Americans do, so the practice makes the operation more cohesive and effective."

The potential is always there for a volatile situation needing an immediate peacekeeper response. And when the response is given, it must be a coordinated effort to be effective. With language barriers, differences in technique, and varying equipment, those efforts can be hard to achieve. It is through simulations like this that different forces can become cohesive units that can complete the mission before them and restore order.



PHOTO BY SPC. IAN BLAKE

Operation "Velvet Hammer"

By Sgt. First Class Bill Brockberg

Early one January morning, Task Force Shield Soldiers conducted Operation Velvet Hammer, a cordon and search mission to confiscate illegal weapons, ammunition, and contraband, to continue their efforts toward providing a safe and secure environment for the people of Drenoc/Drenovce.

The search didn't turn up much in the way of weapons, but the training that the two companies involved went through to prepare, along with the general staff section support, and the interaction with the villagers, made this a successful mission.

"From the inception of this mission, from the brief-backs and rehearsals, to the integration of a significant number of General Staff (GS) assets, truly it was an integrated mission," said Lt. Col. Gordon Ellis, Task Force Shield commander.

Operation Velvet Hammer involved platoons from Company C, 206th Engineer Battalion and Company C, 1-118th Infantry, plus Air Operations, Military Police and search dogs, Psychological Operations loudspeaker teams and staff elements, including personnel and equipment from the Signal, Judge Advocate General and Public Affairs.

The planning of Velvet Hammer began with the objective of conducting a thorough cordon and search to add to the safety of the village and without angering the local residents. In previous weeks, Task Force Shield patrols had found weapons in abandoned or vacant buildings in the area, and in two incidents children had found illegal weapons, including a hand grenade.

"In the past, men had congregated when we were searching empty buildings in that town," said Capt. Hardy Paschal, commander, Company C, 1-118th Infantry. "I was concerned that they would congregate again and be very upset that we were searching homes that are occupied. My major concern was belligerence."

That "belligerence" Paschal mentioned was important in how Velvet Hammer was planned and executed safely and effi-



PHOTO BY SGT. BENJAMIN HOKKANEN

(Near Upper Right) A Task Force Shield Soldier searches a Drenoc/Drenovce resident before the man leaves the town during the cordon and search

(Far Upper Right) A Soldier inspects a barn for any contraband.

(Far Right) Soldiers using a metal detector and a probe search the yard of a resident.

(Near Right) Using a poking stick, a Soldier checks out a hay loft.



PHOTO BY SGT. BENJAMIN HOKKANEN

ciently. "My feeling was that if the people congregated, we needed to be prepared for civilian riot control," said Paschal. "As a unit, that is what Charlie Company, 1-118th is trained for—civilian riot control and non-lethal weapons training. We were prepared for this mission."

The preparation and execution of the mission had been set up with an amnesty day in late December whereby area residents could turn in illegal weapons and receive an electric space heater for their home. From there, the operation task force established the day, time, search, communication, security and observation support to execute Velvet Hammer. Three teams of Soldiers went door to door searching homes, one team provided security around the border of Drenovce/Drenoc, and a reserve team ready to apprehend or detain suspects.

More support included three helicopters providing continual aerial observation, while on the ground, legal personnel ensured the search was within policy and procedures for Multi-National Brigade-(East) and KFOR. A command post was established where the mission could be observed and communication could be maintained among all the squads, platoons and support elements.

"The aerial photos for this mission came from myself



PHOTO BY SGT. BENJAMIN HOKKANEN



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TOMAS ROFKAHR

and Sgt. Steven Banks," said Staff Sgt. Franklin Kohler of Company C, 206th Engineers. Lt. Daniel Cooper, Kohler's platoon leader, then took those images and drew checkpoints, command post sites and labeled the streets on the photos. "Through the use of this map, all command and control was simplified, and this resulted in a well-executed operation; everyone down to the individual Soldier knew their role."

Capt. Scott Thomas, commander, Company C, 206th Engineers led the search teams, and he had the mayor of Drenoc/Drenovce with him to act as a liaison between the residents and the Soldiers.

"Obviously, as we conduct a cordon and search, it can be perceived as a very negative event," Ellis said. "The professionalism of the Soldiers was first-rate, even to the point where they covered their boots with shoe covers so they wouldn't track dirt into the house to do their search. They were polite, kept everybody inside where it was warm, and performed their missions in an admirable manner."

This resulted in a positive interaction between KFOR and Drenoc/Drenovce residents. "We very clearly laid out a path to this cordon and search in that we developed sound information as to why we were doing what we were doing," Ellis said. "We have clearly articulated why we were there."

Operation Condor

Story and Photos By Sgt. Benjamin Hokkanen



(Above) Staff Sgt. Joseph Pringle, Company C, 1-118th Infantry, searches a pile of hay for contraband.

(Upper Right) Soldiers of Company C, 1-118th Infantry, explain the cordon and search to a resident of Suvo Grlo/Suhogerlle.

(Far Right) A French Legionnaire uses a metal detector to search outside a home.

(Middle) Charlie Company Soldiers move to board a French Puma helicopter.

Helicopters flying into Camp Monteith aren't a rare sight, but to have a French helicopter fly in is something that doesn't happen often. To see U.S. Soldiers load onto the French birds and take off is an even rarer sight.

Operation Condor consisted of joining forces with the French to travel out of the Multi-National Brigade (East) sector and conduct a cordon and search mission, and then spend a couple of days and nights on the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) in the French sector.

Early in the morning, Soldiers from Company C, 1-118th Infantry began lining up their vehicles at the French camp near Novo Selo to travel out to the village where they would be conducting the morning's mission – a cordon and search.

In the village of Suvo Grlo/Suhogerlle, Soldiers set up their outer cordon and once that was established, the inner cordon and

search teams moved in and began their sweep through the village. U.S. Soldiers approached the houses and, with the aid of their interpreters, informed the residents of the homes in the village what

was going to happen.

U.S. Soldiers searched the residential buildings, and French Legionnaires equipped with metal detectors swept through the outside buildings, yards, vehicles, and crops being stored outside.

"The first house that we went to had me concerned," said 1st Lt. Jason Cain, 3rd Platoon Platoon Leader, Company C, 1-118th Infantry. "The lady who answered the door was pretty irate. She didn't want us in her house and she didn't want us in her yard. I had my squad leader who was leading the search team talk to her through our translator and calm her down enough to find out what the problem was and finally let us in the house to search. He just let her know that we are U.S. KFOR, and we were just there to help ensure a safe and secure environment for her and her family as well as the rest of her community. We later found out why she was upset, and that was because just a couple of months earlier, other KFOR soldiers had already come in and searched her house. It just so happens that this village is right on the edge of the Spanish and French sectors, and on some maps it is in the French sector and on other maps it is in the Spanish sector.

"Overall though, my squad leader was able to do a great job of settling the situation and making sure that we were able to continue the search without any issues. We were really thorough during the search, too. We were looking



Swoops In

through cupboards, under rugs, in bags, everywhere. We even had to have one homeowner pull up a piece of metal from his floor to check what was underneath. Overall though, I got the impression that the people were happy to see us there and doing our job."

After the morning's cordon and search was complete, some U.S. Soldiers once again boarded the French birds and flew out to the ABL, while the rest of Charlie Company convoyed out to the rendezvous point.

"Our mission on the ABL was to conduct dismounted observation posts and mounted patrols with the French," said Capt. Hardy Paschal, commander, Company C, 1-118th Infantry, TF Shield. "It's a great opportunity for French and U.S. forces to continue to provide a safe and secure environment."

Once at the meeting point, the French commander and Paschal coordinated the upcoming observation posts and mounted patrols of the ABL.

"It was a special operation. The French had requested a few American Soldiers to help patrol this portion of the ABL for a cross-boundary operation."

Both armies got an opportunity to practice the procedures for ABL crossing during their time with the French. "Second Platoon did come across was a Serbian ABL violation where they had come across the ABL," explained Paschal. "We resolved the situation using the necessary procedures, and after they went through the procedure with them they shook hands and traded some gear and took some pictures. Overall, it was just a minor incident."

Col. Jack Lee, TF Deputy Commander Maneuver, Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Dillon, TF Falcon Command Sergeant Major, and Gen. Yves De Kermabon, KFOR commander visited the soldiers on the ABL. After being briefed on the operations being conducted during the joint mission, Kermabon, Lee, and Dillon joined a mounted patrol and inspected the American camp on the other side of the hilltop from the command post.

"Here we're building positive relationships with the French," Lee said. "We've



had excellent cooperation and have been lucky to have worked with them,"

"Any time you can be exposed to different nationalities, it's a good opportunity," said Dillon, "In my 40 years of experience, I've found that Soldiers are the same wherever you go, despite the differences in nationality and leadership."

"This mission was a success for several reasons," said Paschal. "We got to see how other armies work, how they

operate. And all the units get to combine together to help each other perform our peacekeeping mission here for the people of Kosovo. KFOR as a whole is also able to benefit from these out-of-sector missions because we can show the people of Kosovo that we are all working together – French, American, German – that we aren't all sectioned off into our own areas, but we are all here to work together to give them a safe and secure environ-



PHOTOS BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES

What is the ABL?

Whenever there are two territories that are connected by land to one another, there must be a designation of where one territory stops and the other begins. For countries, provinces, counties, and towns, that line is called a border. But the situation in Kosovo is different than in most cases. United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) administers Kosovo and in this situation, the border between Kosovo and Serbia is referred to as the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL).

The ABL, the line between the territory of Kosovo and Serbia proper, is an area that is constantly patrolled by the soldiers of KFOR. The ABL has been in existence since the beginning of KFOR in 1999 with the passing of United Nations Security

Council Resolution 1244.

As with any boundary between two territories, the ABL is of great importance for providing a safe and secure environment for the people of Kosovo. Units from TF Shield are responsible for patrolling the portion of the ABL that falls within the jurisdiction of Multinational Brigade (East).

One of the purposes of the ABL is to keep KFOR Soldiers out of Serbia, and Serbian troops out of Kosovo. If someone crosses the line, the Soldier must sling his weapon and wave his cap to signal to those around him that he has accidentally crossed the ABL. Any time something like that happens, Soldiers must report it to their command immediately.

"We're able to do our job because of the mutual respect we have for each other," said Lt. Col. Dannie Stanbery, chief of Joint Implementation Commis-

sion (JIC), about the cooperation KFOR has with the Serbian forces that patrol the other side of the ABL.

But not all the action takes place on the ABL. Back on Camp Bondsteel, Stanbery has his own share of responsibilities and duties when it comes to the ABL. Whenever anyone crosses the line, they must report it to their command, as well as to the JIC. It is the responsibility of that office to record the incidents and verify them for accuracy.

Each side reaps the benefits of both forces performing synchronized patrols. The smuggling of contraband items has been slowed due to the patrols. Patrols like these have not always been part of KFOR's operations; this rotation was the first time Serbian forces cooperated in such a way.

But with any boundary, there are certain restrictions as to how close vehicles can approach it. There is a no-fly zone within five kilometers of the ABL. Ground vehicles can drive up to the ABL without crossing it. This is referred to as the Ground Security Zone.

But there are times in which TF Falcon Soldiers are requested to aid their allies in patrolling other sections of the ABL. In Operation Condor, Company C, 1-118th Infantry, TF Shield, was requested to aid the Kosovo KFOR Tactical Reserve Maneuver Battalion, 8th Parachute Regiment, French Army, in patrolling a northern section of the ABL. This part of the ABL was located high in the hills of northern Kosovo, overlooking steep paths that wound through snow-covered woods.

In order to maintain security, the ABL needs to be patrolled and protected both in our sector and in others, both to stem the flow of smuggled goods and to simply ensure that no one crosses it when they are not supposed to. It is just another of the responsibilities of being peacekeepers.



The what, where, how, and why of the administrative boundary line.

By Spc. Ian Blake

(Above) Staff Sgt. David Brigman, Company C, 1-118th Infantry, looks out across the ABL.

(Right) A member of the 8th Parachute Regiment, French Army, pulls security on the Administrative Boundary Line.



U.S. ARMY IMAGES

New Threads for the Kids in Green

Hook and pile unit patches, pixelated patterns, and no more black boots are the new BDU.

The new Army combat uniform.

Say goodbye to the sew shops, big floppy collars and dry-cleaning – the new Army Combat Uniform (ACU) is almost here.

The good news is that the Army will be issuing the ACU in April. The bad news is that they're issuing them to deploying units first. So that means if you'll be heading to someplace warm and sandy, you might just get them on the way out. Everyone else should have them by the end of 2007. Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers will be issued four ACUs in the next couple of years whereas Active component Soldiers will have to purchase their own via their clothing replacement allowance.

Still, getting issued one is certainly preferable to buying a couple sets. At \$88 per set, you'd burn up a good amount of drill pay just to get in one. Plus, no one has set the wear-out date for the BDU nor set policies to avoid mixed uniform formations.

But when you do get one, you can expect a lot of changes.

The uniform's most obvious change is the new pattern. The new pattern is pixelated, digital-looking scheme that softens the contrast of the camouflage pattern. It is based off the new Marine uniform and designed to be worn everywhere in the world.

The absence of hard lines should enable the wearer to stay more concealed not only when stationary, but also on the move. The new, digital pattern frees the Army from stocking

different kinds of uniforms. Although the pattern is not the best for every environment, it is certainly usable across multiple environments.

One of the more controversial elements of the new uniform is the lack of buttons. Most everything in the ACU uses Velcro or zippers. The pockets, nametapes and patches all use Velcro. There are two sides to this issue. Velcro can be noisy as well as get dirty. When Velcro gets dirty it loses some of its ability to stay closed. Plus, if the Velcro has a problem it can be difficult to fix in the field. Trying to close buttons when in the prone position isn't easy. If you've ever worn tight body armor they can certainly be a real pain.

The reality is that using pockets with Velcro or buttons isn't really that big of an issue. We've been using items with Velcro, like body armor and the load-bearing vest for years, and no one has really complained loudly about it. It seems that the functionality of Velcro has trumped the buttons.

Pockets have changed a great deal with the ACU. The pockets on the chest are not only angled, they are optimized for use with body armor. The Velcro certainly helps here in that you can open the body armor and open the pocket to get what you need. Some-

thing not accomplished easily if there were buttons on the flap.

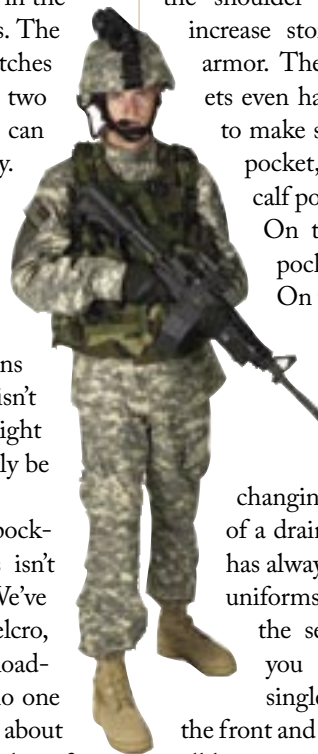
The new ACU also has shoulder pockets and a 3-slot pen pocket on the arm. While having a pen pocket that you can actually use is sure to be handy, the shoulder pockets will definitely increase storage when using body armor. The front-tilted leg pockets even have an elastic drawstring to make sure what you put in the pocket, stays in. There's even a calf pocket to hold small items.

On top of all that there's a pocket in the new patrol cap.

On the elbows and knees are flaps to put on kneepads and elbow pads.

An added advantage of the new ACU is that now,

changing units won't be much of a drain on the pocket book. It has always been a pain to get new uniforms ready for wear with all the sewing. With the ACU, you simply attach them. A single rank insignia goes in the front and not on the collar, so we'll all have to re-train ourselves in where to look when trying to determine rank and if saluting is required. The ACU also has a permanent press treatment to keep Soldiers looking good and keep them from spending money on dry-cleaning.



See ACU, page 23

Going Home Again

*Life has gone on without you, so
take it slow when you return.*

Sandy Hanke joins a crowd of family and friends in giving a boisterous welcome home to Soldiers as they march into Fort Carson special events center after arriving back from a year-long deployment to Iraq.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

Going home. Sounds like a wonderful thing to do, right? I know, I know, we all have our friends, family, and significant others anxiously awaiting our arrival home, and we've all missed each other so much since we began this deployment months ago. One big thing to remember is that a lot of changes have occurred since you left.

You've changed. Gained weight, lost weight, become more of a leader, learned to follow directions better – whatever the case may be, this deployment has changed all of us, and in ways we may not even realize.

The people at home have changed, too. Children have gotten bigger, stronger, faster, smarter, and had thousands of little changes since you were last together. Spouses and significant others have changed, too. They've adapted to life without you. Taking care of your chores, paying all the bills, taking care of the kids full-time, new hobbies, and friends to help pass the time.

All these changes have taken place, and it'll be natural for us to come back and want to change things back to the way that they were before we left on our Kosovo adventure. Well, don't. Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Andrew Aquino, Multi-National Brigade (East) staff chaplain, suggests not making any changes to the way things are being run at home for at least 30 days. This period gives you a chance to observe routines that developed in your absence.

"When we get home, our first instinct will be to go charging right

back into doing things the way that we did before we left," said Aquino. "Observe the way things have been running in your absence. Who knows, maybe others have come up with a more efficient way of doing something that you used to do."

Reestablishing the roles around the house can be difficult. We will be returning to an environment where others have been taking care of our responsibilities in our absence. This can have a variety of effects on us after we have been home a while and the happiness of our arrival has passed. One of the effects is that spouses, significant others, family members, and friends may feel anger and resentment towards you over the loss of their personal goals and time because they were covering for your absence.

It is especially imperative that Soldiers have a plan for reuniting with their spouse or significant other. Aquino has some easy to follow tips for this reunion; tell the person how you feel, put yourself in his/her shoes, show love and affection, go slow and pace yourself (don't try and make up for all the months apart in two weeks), and, most importantly, date your significant other (for some ideas, check out this issue's *Off Duty* column).

It's also essential to keep in mind the fact that any problems that existed in the relationship prior to your departure will still be there, because separation doesn't solve problems, only people can solve problems in a relationship.

Reuniting with children is something all the parents in this task force are eagerly looking forward to. There are some tips to keep in mind when you return that will help ease your transition back into children's lives as well. As parents, you cannot expect your children to understand why we have been gone, nor can we allow ourselves to think that the separation was more difficult for us than it was for them. Aquino suggests that spending alone time with each of your children and family members will help reopen the doors for communication and allow you to get reacquainted with everyone.

While away, many of us have experienced changes in our personal habits. Some of these changes may be viewed as negative by our family members and will need to be adjusted. Some Soldiers have started smoking, dipping, swearing, and other habits that our families may not approve of, or we may not feel appropriate to display in their company. These behaviors can be modified. If you have a nicotine addiction and would like to quit, Sgt. Wright reminds us that all Soldiers are welcome to visit the Combat Stress Control Team for smoking cessation classes and products.

Employers and Co-workers are the final group of people you will have to reunite with. It's important to make sure you contact your employer within the first 30 days of your arrival home, but don't rush getting back to work.

See *HOME*, page 23

Celebrating Black History Month



PHOTO BY SGT. STEPHEN GROVES

Task Force Lancer and Protector leaders share their views on the importance of diversity in the military.

Master Sgt. Linda Berry, Provost Marshal Office NCOIC.

Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pockets, and there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States," said the famous African-American statesman Frederick Douglass.

This February we celebrate Black History Month, a period during which we should look back to see the accomplishments and advances made by the African-American community to our country. African Americans have participated in every major U.S. war, although not under the most friendly of conditions.

African-Americans in the Army have had many different roles. The first all-black unit came into the national consciousness when the 54th Infantry, a company made of mostly freed northern slaves, courageously stormed the Confederate fort at Battery Wagner during the Civil War. In peacetime, black cavalry units, like the 9th and 10th Cavalries, kept order on the frontier, eventually gaining the nickname "Buffalo Soldiers" from the Cheyenne Indians for their dark skin and their prowess in battle, wrote Elissa Haney of Infoplease.com

But the one of the most well-known

black military unit would be the Tuskegee Airmen at the onset of World War II; blacks were petitioning the government to integrate the military. The government, though still reluctant to do so, created in 1941 the first all-black military aviation program at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1941. Because they were still segregated, the program drew criticism from the black community.

Incorporation and credit for blacks in the military has been slow. Black and white Soldiers were not integrated until President Harry S. Truman overturned the centuries-old policy by an executive order in 1948.

Ever since then the military has integrated African-Americans into the armed forces. Today African-Americans serve alongside servicemen and women of all races and contribute to the overall success of the United States military.

"We are an Army of One, 'diversified,'" said Master Sgt. Linda Berry, Provost Marshal Office NCOIC, Task Force Protector. "If you sit in on a command sergeant major meeting, you will see National Guard, Reservists, AGR, black, white, male, female, and Air Force from multiple states."

"Being in an ethnically divided environment such as Kosovo causes me to reflect upon the value of preserving eth-

nic heritage and history," said Lt. Col. John Harris, Squadron Commander, 2-107th Cavalry, TF Lancer, "In other words, is it destructive to a society to encourage celebration of ethnic and cultural differences? Would we be better served as a society to blend all of our cultures in a central 'melting pot' and stop supporting events that emphasize our differences? Absolutely not! In this society, it is important to show each generation that neither appearance, nor religious beliefs, nor ethnic background makes you greater or less than any other group. They need to learn that success in our culture is attainable; that it is a product of hard work and commitment, not skin color or religious choices. Therefore, Black History Month is a time to inspire and encourage."

"The bottom line is, Black History Month means we are all living Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of working and living together," concluded Berry, "The Bondsteel dining facilities say it all, they serve Soldiers and civilians of all nationalities. The mission in Kosovo truly means we are an Army of One, diversified, coming together to promote peace." ✪



Spc. Ian Blake is a member of the 364th MPAD and can be reached at ian.blake@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil

My first duty station was in Korea at Camp Casey. I filled out my wish list form (literally a wish) that the Army provided, and put down a couple of places in Georgia and then Hawaii. But nope, I got told upon graduating from AIT that I had 10 days to go home, say goodbye to everyone and gather my things and then I was heading off to Korea! I was livid because I believed in the Army's wish list, and this would be the first time that I had ever left Georgia, even the United States! I think I cried all the way there.

I was with the HQ/A 302nd Forward Support Battalion which fell under 2nd Infantry Division. While I was there, my job was certainly not as a 92Y! I was doing everything. I dug turtle ditches, pulled guard duty, area beautification, all kinds of jobs that no one else wanted to do. But things got better.

Next I went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Fort Bragg was awesome, I loved it there! I was with Charlie Company, 159th Aviation, which is a Chinook unit part of 18th Aviation Brigade at Simmons Army Airfield. We were a detachment from a unit out of Savannah, Georgia, and that was a bummer.

There I had two supply sergeants. I got to go to PLDC at Bragg, and I earned my E-5 rank there as well. As soon as I showed up there they sent me to the promotion board, and then enrolled me into PLDC – everything happened so fast there! I couldn't believe how quick I got my stripes after I got there. The NCOs and command there were great, because they were constantly pushing the Soldiers to excel. We really had a tight group there. Because of their training and teaching, I wasn't afraid to go out and do my job. I knew regulations, and they taught me how to lead Soldiers.

After Bragg I went to Germany. I worked in Giebelstadt with 5-158th Aviation Battalion, which is a Black Hawk aviation unit part of 12th Aviation Brigade. I was happy to be with another aviation unit.

Last but definitely not least is 734th Ordnance Company (EOD) at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico. I am the supply sergeant for a bunch of crazy bomb technicians. It's like having 10 more crazy brothers! The duty is one of the Army's best kept secret for active

duty soldiers. There are about 150 active duty army soldiers and the rest are Air Force, Navy, civil service and contractors. The location isn't very good considering the fact that it is located in the middle of the desert, and the nearest civilization is 35 miles away, but the people of White Sands, including my co-workers, are awesome. We are like a big family.

What is a day in the life of Sgt. Davis like here in Kosovo?

Well, I wake up and thank God that I survived another day in this prison camp, go to the gym and run about five miles on the treadmill to relieve stress. Then, I start my mile, soon to be two mile, journey in the freezing cold towards the EOD shop. Make coffee, check e-mail, complete administrative work, go on logistician runs with TF Med and MI supply sergeants, pick up supplies, return e-mails, go to the gym again, watch Amazing Race with Sgt. Hahn, Peter, Josh, and Tomas at the MWR, then go to my luxurious sea hut, suite of four, and then go to bed.

With all the different things you've done in your career, what has been the highlight?

Wow! Let's see. I don't want to incriminate myself here. One would be when I competed in Fort Bragg's Army 10-miler run right after I came off of profile for breaking my ankle. That day was awesome! I was in so much pain upon my seventh mile, but I was determined not to quit because that was just unacceptable at Bragg, even if you are hurt.

Yes, I must say that I was a little brain-washed. I felt that I had to finish with my company. I was the only female running with my unit at the time. They kept motivating me and did not leave me behind once, even though they could have finish long ago. I finished the run. It just goes to show that one can do anything that he or she sets the mind to do. I still have my T-shirt with my number on it—119.

What has the Army done for you as a person?

As a person, the Army has made me a very culturally diverse person. I have been to so many different countries and places, and have seen so many beautiful people of different cultures, races, nationalities that I have gained a respect

for all. I have concluded that we all are the same in a lot of our ways of living, just different languages, locations and physical appearances. Everyone wants to live long, happy, prosperous, peaceful lives and that is what it boils down to. It is just sad that everyone doesn't look at it the way I do.

How has the Army prepared you to go out and have a successful civilian life and career?

The Army has kept me away from home so much that I now appreciate the small things in life that I would normally take for granted if I had not joined, like butterflies in the Spring, sunrises in the mornings, sunsets in the evenings, and bright stars and silence of the night in the country sides of Georgia. It has also prepared me to deal with all types of different personalities and situations during stressful times, which will come in handy.

What do you want to do when you get out of the Army?

Short term, just finish my degree in business management and catch up on lost time with my beautiful twelve-year-old son, Aaron, by going fishing every weekend. Long term, get married again, maybe have another kid, and open one of the finest, coziest European style cafés in Savannah, Georgia.

With the deployment winding down, what are some of the things you're going to take home with you and remember most about this deployment?

I will greatly miss a few folks who I can truly call friends that I have encountered upon my tour. I will definitely miss my EOD family, because we went through some good times and bad times together, and made it through. Last but not least, I will never forget my Charlie Brown Family, and hopefully they will not forget that Violet truly does love all of them at heart.

Do you have any words of wisdom, any life mantra that you try to live by?

Yes, always stand up for what you believe in and follow your heart. Change what you can if it will make a positive difference and bring a smile to someone's face. If for some reason you fail, keep your head up, accept it, move on and keep the faith. Never let anyone deprive you of your right to happiness and joy. Treat each day as if it was your last. ■

Now, how to keep it all from sliding down a bucket of hot-wings when I get home.

Ultimately, for each of us there needs to be a catalyst that allows us to begin transitioning the need to work out from "chore" to "reward." Too often, we set poor goals for ourselves and turn the act of exercising into a stressor, something we spend our day dreading and only reluctantly engage in. With popular media battering us with images of hyper-fit workout mutants with zero body fat and pecs that could stop bullets, it's no wonder the average American gets frustrated. We're a society that loves fast food, cable TV, broadband Internet, and video games. We're used to gratification being instant, or at least darn close. For a country that has a drive-thru for nearly everything and enough fad diet books to pave admin-alley, the thought of a long, sustained effort to lose weight and improve fitness is one that just doesn't compute.

For myself, I believe you have to start slow. You have to start gradually and carefully. You trick your body into working out for a while and sooner or later it starts to let you know that exercise isn't so bad. As your fitness begins to improve, your self-image will too, and you'll start

exploring ways to capitalize on your newfound form.

When exercise becomes a habit – a happy habit – you've taken the first step in truly making a lifestyle change for the better.

As your body gets stronger you'll find that you're more careful about what you put into it as well. One of the best byproducts of exercise is the growing awareness of what you eat and when. Again, start slow. Your current eating habits were learned over a lifetime and don't appreciate being reorganized immediately. Remember to reward yourself for good effort and bit-by-bit start exerting some self-control when the urges for comfort food start to scream for deep-dish pizza and butter burgers.

Probably the key habit to work on picking up is recognizing and appreciating your successes. Too many of us drop good workout plans or fall off the diet wagon because we don't see the results we expect as soon as we'd like. We look to others for validation of our progress when we should honestly look to ourselves.

One of my workout partners was hoping to lose around 15 pounds here in Kosovo. Instead, he dropped little weight, but improved his 2-mile time by

more than 45 seconds and can now hold a seven-minute-mile for six miles. Both are significant accomplishments, and should be appreciated for what they are, not minimized because the weight loss goal wasn't met.

This may sound odd, but for most of us, the best thing for us to do in order to get faster and fitter, is to simply slow down. Good or bad, habits aren't picked up overnight; they're learned gradually, over months and even years of repetition. Don't expect to be able to change the way your body works overnight, and don't sell yourself short when recognizing your accomplishments.

Regardless of where you stand in the fight for fit or fat, what matters most is what you do next, and what you keep doing down the road. Build good habits carefully, a mile and a meal at a time. What you'll come to realize is that working out, like life, isn't about the destination or the goal; it's about the time and care taken along the way. The best part of all is that it's never too late to start. ★



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ACU *(Continued from Page 19)*

One of the more notable items on everyone's mind is the new boots. If you've worn desert boots, you know there is a certain amount of upkeep to the no-shine boots. There are two kinds of boots to be worn with the ACU: a temperate climate boot with Gore-Tex liner and a desert suede boot.

The nice thing about the ACU is that it was field-tested based on how we Soldiers work and fight. The current BDU was designed around 20 years ago when most of the Army didn't wear body armor or kneepads. Three different versions of the uniform were sent to Iraq and other locations for testing. Some of the best elements of the thousands of uniforms produced were combined into the final ACU. ★



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HOME *(Continued from Page 20)*

There is a lot of readjusting you have to do and stress will follow that, so the stress of work isn't something you need right away upon arriving home.

Sgt. Gary Wright, 139th Combat Stress Control Team, suggests waiting about two weeks to 30 days before going back to work. When you do return to work, you may be faced with some animosity.

Co-workers may feel slighted because they had to pick up the slack you left behind when you were deployed, or employers may feel shorted because they lost an employee. This situation is one that needs to be handled professionally as possible. Time is about the only way to cure these feelings.

Jobs will also be different for many of us because we hold different positions in the civilian world than we do in the Army. Some of us have more authority in the civilian world, so we will have to adjust to giving orders once again,

where-as some of us are used to being in control in the military, only to go back to our civilian job and have to take orders. With time these adjustments will be made for all of us.

The most important thing to remember is that even though everyone is happy to have you home safely, you can't expect everyone to change just because you are back.

By following some of these tips, you can be set up for a successful re-deployment home and a smoother re-integration back into your civilian life.

For more tips and information visit your chaplain, the American Red Cross, Army One Source, your family support group, and the mental health group. ★



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Parting Shots



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